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ABSTRACT

This issue brief examines strategies that states can use to help welfare recipients with learning disabilities move toward self-sufficiency within the context of welfare reform. It defines a learning disability, explains approaches to identifying and assessing undiagnosed learning disabilities, and suggests ways to secure accommodations for training, testing, and functioning in the workplace. It also discusses legal requirements for screening, transitional planning, and accommodations. Provisions under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Americans with Disabilities Act are reviewed. Modifications to work requirements for recipients with learning disabilities are also addressed. The final part of the brief reviews opportunities for interagency collaboration and funding, including collaborations with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Welfare-to-Work grant programs, vocational rehabilitation programs, Medicaid programs, and education programs to address the learning and career development needs of welfare recipients. An appendix includes organizational resources and contacts for more information on learning disabilities. (CR)

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Serving Welfare Recipients with Learning Disabilities in a "Work First" Environment. NGA Issue Briefs.

by
Rebecca Brown and Evelyn Ganzglass

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Serving Welfare Recipients with Learning Disabilities in a Work First Environment

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July 28, 1998

Summary

As the nation's welfare rolls continue to decline dramatically, states are faced with difficult decisions about how best to serve their more challenged recipients in a welfare reform environment that stresses work first and how to complement employment with education and skills training. Although these recipients confront a variety of employment barriers, research indicates that a low level of basic skills is among the most common barriers. A study examining Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients ages twenty-seven to thirty-five who took the Armed Forces Qualifying Test, a test of basic skills deemed to be highly correlated with employability, showed that 33 percent of recipients scored in the test's bottom decile, indicating extremely low basic skill levels.[1]

Some welfare recipients have low skill levels because they dropped out of high school or received inadequate education. Yet there is evidence suggesting that many of them have learning disabilities that impede their skill development. Studies conducted in Ohio, Kansas, and Washington during the past few years indicate that between 25 percent and 35 percent of participants in a former federal welfare-to-work program had learning disabilities and between 5 percent and 7 percent were mildly mentally retarded. More than 85 percent of the participants identified in the Washington study as having learning disabilities had not been previously identified as learning disabled by the public school system.[2] The failure of some schools to identify learning disabilities among young girls is one explanation researchers offer for the significant number of welfare recipients with learning disabilities. According to the National Institute for Literacy, about three boys are determined to have a learning disability for every girl who is so determined. Girls typically are less aggressive and outspoken in elementary school than boys, so their potential learning disability may go unnoticed and untreated.

Although the low level of educational attainment among some welfare recipients is widely recognized, the link among learning disabilities, low literacy levels, and welfare dependency is not well understood. What constitutes a learning disability? How can the number of welfare recipients with learning disabilities be determined? What is the relationship between learning disabilities and low literacy and basic skill levels? How does a learning disability affect an individual's capacity to succeed in the workplace? States are renewing or undertaking efforts to address these information gaps. They want to identify effective approaches to providing screening, assessment, case management, and pre- and postemployment services for clients with learning disabilities.

For example, as part of its State Learning Disabilities Initiative, Washington developed a screening tool and new program strategies for welfare recipients with learning disabilities using a four "Rs" model: *recognition* (assessment for presence of a learning disability); *remediation* (preparatory services for employment and training programs); *rehabilitation* (job preparation and career exploration); and *reasonable accommodation* (workplace accommodations to assist in work success).

This *Issue Brief* examines strategies that states can use to help welfare recipients with learning disabilities move toward self-sufficiency within the context of welfare reform. It defines a learning disability; explains approaches to identifying and assessing undiagnosed learning disabilities; and suggests ways to secure accommodations for training, testing, and functioning in the workplace. It also

discusses legal requirements for screening, transitional planning, and accommodation; modifications to work requirements for recipients with learning disabilities; and opportunities for interagency collaboration and funding.

Defining a Learning Disability

The federal Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities defines "learning disabilities" as disorders that create difficulty in acquiring and using skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and reasoning. These disorders can also inhibit mathematical abilities and social interactions. Learning disabilities probably are caused by a dysfunction in the central nervous system. Most practitioners agree that individuals with learning disabilities typically possess average or above-average levels of intelligence. However, the disability creates unexpected deficits in key skills. When the nature of the deficits is unidentified or unaddressed, the disability can have profound effects on an individual's academic and vocational success and emotional growth and well-being.

Learning how to read is the most serious challenge for most children and adults diagnosed with a learning disability. These individuals have trouble breaking words into smaller units of sound, which makes reading a slow, intense, and inefficient process. Those with learning disabilities have lower average scores on literacy proficiency scales, and adults who report having learning disabilities use libraries and read newspapers less frequently than those without learning disabilities.[3]

Serving Recipients with Learning Disabilities under Welfare Reform

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) presents states with new challenges and opportunities to help recipients with learning disabilities become self-sufficient. Previous welfare-to-work programs that focused on basic skills enhancement tended to help those recipients who could leave the rolls to obtain higher wage jobs. Recipients with very low literacy levels did not achieve employment or earnings gains. Because of the entry requirements of occupational training programs, most low-functioning recipients were referred to nonwork-related adult basic education (ABE) programs rather than occupational training programs that produced more positive results. Most programs did not attempt to identify the prevalence of learning disabilities in the populations they served. Consequently, many of the individuals referred to ABE programs did not succeed, dropped out, and did not pursue further training.

This experience contributed to the shift away from an up-front education and training approach to a work first approach that emphasizes rapid workforce attachment. Time limits and stringent work requirements under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program require recipients who previously had been exempted from, or had not succeeded in, welfare-to-work activities to find and keep a job that will support them and their families.

Under the new law, basic skill deficiencies or learning disabilities that prevent people from getting and keeping a job have to be addressed within a work context, combining education and work while people are still receiving cash assistance and/or providing necessary supports once they become employed. Welfare-to-work programs and workplaces may have to make special accommodations to help recipients once considered uneducable and unemployable obtain, maintain, and advance in employment.

Assisting welfare recipients with learning disabilities has a number of implications for state and local policies and programs, including:

- the type of intake and assessment procedures used to determine client skill levels and needs;
- the types of services teen parents on welfare receive at school;
- the design of literacy training and ABE programs;
- the testing used to determine General Educational Development (GED) certification and other accreditation;
- the types of employment opportunities available for disadvantaged individuals with learning disabilities; and
- the nature of employer involvement in welfare-to-work programs.

Identifying and Assessing Learning Disabilities

To determine which clients are learning disabled and need appropriate educational and employability services, some states are measuring the percentage of their total welfare population with learning disabilities to identify and assess these clients' needs. For example, Rhode Island found that 21 percent of a sample of new TANF applicants between May 1997 and February 1998 had a learning disability.

Many low-income individuals enter the welfare system without ever having had a formal diagnosis or assessment to detect a learning disability. Individuals with learning disabilities face different challenges than other adults with similarly low levels of literacy and educational attainment. It is critical that they be identified and assessed as soon as possible so that pre- and postemployment services can be tailored to their learning needs. To accomplish these service delivery goals, some states are improving or developing learning disability screening and assessment procedures.

Some states train caseworkers to screen clients they suspect may have a learning disability and refer them to vocational rehabilitation staff or learning disability specialists for further diagnosis. Typically, caseworkers assist clients in developing an employability plan that includes goals and objectives they must meet prior to their determination as job ready. For individuals with learning disabilities, this plan would likely include basic skills and literacy education services prior to employment or once they are employed. The following states are among those that have piloted screening and assessment tools.

Kansas implemented a Learning Disabilities Initiative project in two counties in 1996. The initiative was similar to Washington's project and sought to examine the prevalence of learning disabilities within the TANF population and improve service delivery strategies for these clients. Caseworkers continue to screen clients using a new tool for identifying persons with learning disabilities that includes self-identification tests, interviews, and performance assessments. Contact: Phyllis Lewin, 913/296-3713.

Missouri has piloted a learning disabilities screening tool since 1995 using the protocols developed by Washington. Division of family services staff are trained to administer sections of the tool. Results and recommendations from the pilot project should be available by January 1999. Contact: Tom Jones, 573/526-3581.

Washington conducted a two-site pilot project beginning in 1994 to test a screening tool and examine new program strategies and instructional techniques for promoting self-sufficiency within the learning disabled welfare population. Overall, 35 percent of study participants were identified as learning disabled. Contact: Melinda Giovengo, 206/660-7157.

In Wisconsin case management training addresses the importance of identifying learning disabilities during the intake and assessment process and of making appropriate accommodations in clients' employability plans to deal with their disabilities. Contact: J. Jean Rogers, 608/266-3035.

Making Accommodations for Training, Testing, and Employment

Learning disabilities are neurological impairments that appear in early childhood and persist into adulthood. Because the brain continues to develop during the early stages of life, children with learning disabilities respond better to interventions to lessen their disabilities than do adults. Adults with learning disabilities need remedial education that is adapted to their specific learning needs. To qualify for most employment, or to acquire job skills, many individuals with learning disabilities need basic literacy training. This training should use methods that address the special challenges they face. Some of these challenges include dyslexia, poor concentration ability, difficulty in memorizing, and problems with sentence structure.

Although recipients may enhance their skill levels, job-readiness status, and socialization ability through modified basic education, literacy training, or vocational rehabilitation programs, learning disabilities are a lifelong condition. Most of them will need to secure "reasonable accommodations" to participate in more intensive training and education programs, accreditation testing, and the workplace. For example, accommodations for individuals taking the GED certificate exam could include having more time to take the test, having the test dictated rather than administered in a written format, waiving requirements for using handwritten materials, and taking tests in isolation to alleviate distraction.[4] In the workplace, one accommodation could be getting job instructions in a different format than other workers. Other accommodations could include the use of books on tape, notetakers, and laptop computers.

Accommodations can help learning disabled individuals reach their full potential in the workplace, but some policymakers and practitioners assert that disclosing a need for accommodation during the application process actually reduces their chances of being hired. Prospective employers may believe that people with learning disabilities will perform less capably on the job and that the requirements of certain laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, may be too burdensome. Caseworkers might advise workers to emphasize their skills and competencies rather than discuss their learning disability during the initial job interview and to disclose their learning disability only after a job has been offered and accepted. However, individuals who need workplace accommodations may find that this approach limits their opportunities to work and advance in certain fields or occupations. Withholding information on an individual's learning disability may also jeopardize the relationship between the firm hiring the recipient and the intermediary organization or agency that placed the individual with the employer.

A different approach to preemployment counseling for welfare recipients with learning disabilities teaches them how to ask employers for accommodations and alleviate employer concerns and misperceptions about learning disabilities. For example, individuals and their placement agencies may find it useful to emphasize that accommodations are often relatively inexpensive and easy to obtain and that services are available to help employers secure such accommodations. Some agencies and other service providers are targeting jobs for learning disabled recipients that do not require special accommodations.

States are using various approaches to address the training and employment needs of recipients with learning disabilities.

The El Paso, Texas, Community College Literacy and Workforce Development Center receives most of its learning disabled client referrals from the state rehabilitation council. Literacy tutors are available weekly to provide guidance to students entering vocational education programs and help them obtain support services. Basic and job skills training is offered using strategies tailored to individuals with learning disabilities. The program also offers career training that merges basic skills instruction with vocational training as well as provides vocational guidance, computer-assisted instruction, and job search and job placement assistance. The program targets occupations with career ladders and provides lifelong learning opportunities to interested students once they become employed. Typical job placements include basic care attendants, certified nurse's assistants, child care providers, irrigation systems installers, and landscapers. Contact: Kathleen Bombach, 915/831-4432.

Tennessee is piloting an individualized learning program for welfare recipients with learning disabilities in Davidson County, which includes Nashville. Clients who are enrolled in ABE instruction participate in a curriculum based on the specific instruction level indicated by their entry test score. The curriculum also incorporates techniques that are geared to *how* the student learns. Learning techniques are assessed using a questionnaire that asks participants to rate their strengths and weaknesses in using twenty-six different learning methods. Contact: Bettie Teasley, 615/313-5652.

North Portland Community College in Oregon administers a welfare reform program for nonreaders and very low-level readers, many of whom have learning disabilities. Typically, participants are welfare recipients, or low-income adults not on welfare, who are able to read at the fourth- or fifth-grade levels. The program combines a variety of ABE techniques to create a ten-week employability training program that includes career counseling and job shadowing services. A community resource specialist is onsite to help participants gain access to area employment supports, and the community college's program staff are outstationed in TANF case management offices to recruit learning disabled and low-level reading individuals. Contact: Terri Greenfield, 503/281-0495.

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) contracts with the department of education to employ a disability support specialist. The specialist addresses the training and resource needs of TANF case managers and GED certificate preparation instructors who serve TANF recipients with learning difficulties and disabilities. Local TANF case managers receive customized training in identifying potential learning disabilities and arranging accommodations for learning disabled recipients in the work program. GED instructors and other accreditation program providers also receive assistance from the specialist in identifying, modifying, and adapting instructional materials. DHHS conducts ongoing meetings with the department of vocational rehabilitation to help learning disabled recipients access vocational rehabilitation services. Contact: Lynn Winterfield, 603/271-4257.

Kansas is recruiting community colleges to offer "intervention courses." These courses help recipients

with learning disabilities build skills in areas such as setting work priorities and interacting successfully with colleagues. Those with more severe disabilities are referred to vocational rehabilitation agencies for case management services, such as tutoring. Contact: Phyllis Lewin, 913/296-3713.

Wisconsin encourages local welfare agencies to build partnerships with local literacy councils that specialize in providing one-on-one tutoring. By accommodating different learning styles and abilities, this approach has proven effective in helping recipients overcome previous unsuccessful learning experiences. One-on-one tutoring provides additional supports for those dealing with various life issues. Contact: J. Jean Rogers, 608/266-3035.

Typical employment-related tasks with which adults with learning disabilities may have trouble include organizing, planning, scheduling, language comprehension, communication, social interaction, attentiveness, and attention to detail. Employers who are uninformed about how to reasonably accommodate learning disabled individuals are often reluctant to hire them. In some states, case managers encourage employees and employers to use resources that help both of them understand the disability. For example, the Job Accommodation Network is an international consulting resource that provides information about employment issues to employers, rehabilitation professionals, and persons with disabilities. Several other organizations are working with employers to increase job opportunities for learning disabled individuals and encourage more workplace accommodation (see appendix).

Understanding the Legal Requirements for Screening, Transitional Planning, and Accommodation

States should understand federal laws requiring services to individuals with learning disabilities. They should consider how the provisions can be used to develop education and training programs, as well as promote job placement, employment retention, and career advancement opportunities, for welfare recipients with learning disabilities. A learning disability is recognized as a disability under federal law, and several laws explicitly entitle individuals with learning disabilities to certain support services and educational and workplace accommodations.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students with disabilities must receive testing and transition services as part of their educational program. Transition planning must be included in the student's individualized education program (IEP) beginning at age fourteen, or younger if appropriate, and continue until the student leaves school, possibly as late as age twenty-one. IDEA services may be provided to individuals up to age twenty-two if they do not have a high school diploma or GED certificate but are still connected to the school system. Transition services are coordinated services that promote movement from school to postschool activities based on the individual's needs and preferences. Transition planning includes the provision of instruction, related services, and community experiences as well as the development of employment goals and other postschool adult living goals. It may also include functional vocational evaluation and activities to promote the acquisition of daily life skills. IDEA requires schools to notify the student's parents or guardians in writing regarding the identification, evaluation, and placement of their child in special education. The act also provides federal funds to state and local education agencies to guarantee special education to eligible students. States serving teen TANF clients in high school with either identified or suspected learning disabilities can require that screening and other services be provided to these clients as part of IDEA.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Students who do not qualify for special education under IDEA, or those whose disability does not adversely affect their educational performance, may receive special education assistance or accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Under the law, schools must make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities so they can participate in educational programs provided to other students. Accommodations could include modifying the general classroom program, providing special assistance by an aide, developing a behavior management plan, providing counseling, providing special study areas, and using assistive technology devices. Students may also receive services, such as speech and language therapy, occupational or physical therapy, and counseling.

Adults with learning disabilities also are covered under Section 504. They are entitled to assessment and

accommodation to maximize their employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society. The act defines what a comprehensive assessment should include for purposes of determining an individual's eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs. The act's other stated purposes are promoting comprehensive and coordinated state-of-the-art vocational rehabilitation programs, independent living centers and services, research, training, demonstration projects, and equal opportunity.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act ensures that individuals with disabilities can access businesses and other public and private entities. It also requires businesses and public and private entities to make reasonable accommodations to enable a worker or student with special needs to meet the essential functions of the job or class. Accommodations could include making facilities accessible to disabled individuals; acquiring or modifying equipment and devices; modifying examinations, training materials, and policies; providing qualified readers or interpreters; restructuring a job; modifying work schedules; and reassigning persons to vacant positions. The law also prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities with respect to employment.

Modifying Work Requirements for Recipients with Learning Disabilities

States should consider how the flexibility and limitations of the new welfare reform law factor into the design of welfare-to-work programs suited to the needs of recipients with learning disabilities. The federal welfare reform law strictly limits the activities considered as "work" for the purpose of a state meeting TANF work participation rate requirements. These activities include subsidized or unsubsidized employment; on-the-job training; work experience; community service; up to twelve months of vocational education training; six weeks of job search per year; the provision of child care to other welfare recipients; and, for teen parents only, high school or GED certificate preparation. For nonteens without a high school diploma or GED certificate, after twenty hours of participation in the above activities (thirty hours for two-parent families), a state may count participation in education that relates directly to employment or the pursuit of a high school diploma or GED certificate. In some cases, participation in ABE or vocational rehabilitation programs that include these goals may count toward the work participation rate.

Although the activities that fulfill the federal work participation rate requirements are prescribed in federal law, states may define a different set of allowable work activities for the work requirements they impose on individuals as a condition for receiving assistance. States may use TANF funds for a broader array of activities, including promoting job preparation and work, so long as these activities are consistent with the purposes of the law. States may want to modify their work requirements for learning disabled recipients or combine activities that meet the federal work participation rate requirements, such as vocational education training or on-the-job training, with ABE, literacy education, or GED certificate preparation programs that are designed specifically for individuals with learning disabilities.

Tennessee allows welfare recipients who test at or below 8.9 on the Test of Adult Basic Education to take twenty hours of ABE without being subject to the forty-hour work requirement, provided they are making progress in the course. In addition, the recipient's time limit and forty-hour work requirement does not take effect until he or she reaches the ninth-grade level or completes the course. Participants who are not making progress may be referred to vocational rehabilitation agencies where they can be tested for a learning disability. These agencies administer comprehensive tests to detect the severity of the learning disability and design employment-related services based on learning needs. Recipients are exempt from the state's time limits and work requirements while they are enrolled in vocational rehabilitation programs. Contact: Bettie Teasley, 615/313-5652.

In New Hampshire, TANF recipients with documented learning disabilities may qualify for an extension of the time limit on their TANF work activity. Currently, GED certificate education, vocational skills training, and postsecondary education are TANF work activities that are eligible for extensions because of recipient learning disabilities. Contact: Lynn Winterfield, 603/271-4257.

Exploring Opportunities for Interagency Collaboration and Funding

Most states do not have a comprehensive program for serving welfare recipients with learning disabilities, so client needs are often addressed through special links to welfare, education, workforce

development, health, and vocational rehabilitation programs. As states continue to implement the new welfare reform law, they should consider how they can leverage resources and expand capacity by improving relationships with other agencies and outside service providers. This approach also provides an opportunity to reduce duplicative administrative requirements, standardize eligibility restrictions, and coordinate funding streams and reporting.

TANF and Welfare-to-Work Grant Programs

Both the TANF and Welfare-to-Work (WtW) grant programs provide funds for serving welfare recipients with learning disabilities and low literacy levels. Under WtW, eligible clients must be deemed "long-term welfare recipients," defined as those who have received assistance for at least thirty months or who will become ineligible for TANF within twelve months, and have at least two of three specified barriers to employment. (One of the barriers is the lack of a high school diploma or GED certificate and low reading and math skills.)

The department of children and families and department of labor in Florida are working with the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council to support job placement and retention among long-term welfare recipients with learning and other disabilities. The council will use WtW competitive funds to place recipients in customer service, tourism, and light industrial positions through a program administered by the Seminole Community College and Palm Beach Habilitation Center. The program provides assessment, participant matching to an appropriate job and employer, job coaching, and long-term support and followup with counselors for up to three years after placement. Contact: K. Joseph Krieger, 850/488-4180.

The department of health and human services in Hudson County, New Jersey, will use a WtW competitive grant to help low-income individuals with learning disabilities. The project focuses on quick job entry while providing services to address employment barriers. Strategies include specialized learning disabilities evaluation and support services, customized job-specific readiness training, intensive job coaching, family assistance evaluation, customized postemployment services, and ongoing technical assistance to employers. Individual development accounts will be required for all recipients. Contact: Carol Ann Wilson, 201/271-4311.

Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

Several state welfare departments collaborate with the vocational rehabilitation department to provide diagnostic testing and support services to welfare recipients with learning disabilities. For example, some states using TANF caseworkers to screen for learning disabilities often refer identified clients to vocational rehabilitation programs for further testing and a determination of the severity of any disabilities. To be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, an individual must have a physical or mental condition or injury that presents a significant barrier to work and need such services to prepare for, obtain, or keep a job. Typically, a rehabilitation counselor works with a recipient to develop a written plan outlining work objectives, services, service providers, responsibilities, goals, and progress measurements in accordance with the recipient's needs.

Medicaid Programs

Medicaid is another source to pay for diagnostic testing of welfare recipients with learning disabilities. Some states use major hospitals to conduct the testing and then use Medicaid to reimburse them for the service. New York has established a relationship between hospitals and Medicaid for much of the state's diagnostic work. Contact: Lisa Irving, 518/486-4079.

Education Programs

State welfare departments can collaborate with the education department to address the learning and career development needs of welfare recipients while they are still in school. For example, TANF agencies can work with schools to develop a student's IEP. States can also promote the improved identification, intervention, and accommodation of children and teens with learning disabilities during their elementary and secondary school years.

Conclusion

Welfare reform emphasizes work first and assistance to help recipients retain and advance in employment. In an era of time limits and work requirements, states face challenges in determining how to serve welfare recipients with learning disabilities most effectively. The significant number of recipients never identified as learning disabled makes the need for screening and assessment tools particularly compelling. Once recipients with learning disabilities have been identified, mechanisms for referring them to appropriate education, training, and employment opportunities are needed. States can work to alleviate employer concerns and misperceptions about learning disabilities and inform them of the low costs of providing workplace accommodations. They can also collaborate with other agencies and service providers to provide assessment and rehabilitation services to individuals with learning disabilities.

Appendix: Organizational Resources and Contacts for More Information on Learning Disabilities*

Administration on Developmental Disabilities. This federal agency provides funding for university-affiliated programs that promote the independence, productivity, and community integration of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. It also supports state developmental disabilities councils and protection and advocacy systems to develop model programs and advocate for the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities. Contact: 202/690-6590 or <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/add>.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information Line. Specialists are available to answer questions about Titles II and II of the act. Callers may also access information about agency grant opportunities, proposed regulations, and ADA-related publications. Contact: U.S. Department of Justice, 800/514-0301 (voice) or 800/514-0383 (TDD).

Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities. This coalition of national learning disability organizations, media professionals, and funders was created to develop a national campaign to improve awareness and understanding about learning disabilities. Contact: Shirley Cramer, campaign coordinator, 202/326-8700 or <http://www.ldonline.org>.

Council for Learning Disabilities. This national professional organization is dedicated to those who work with learning disabled individuals. The council establishes standards of excellence and promotes innovative research and practice strategies through collaboration and advocacy. Its publication, *Learning Disability Quarterly*, highlights the latest research in the field of learning disabilities. Contact: 913/492-8755.

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. ERIC offers publications, information, and referrals to those working with adults who are learning disabled. It does not provide direct services but disseminates materials through its database and clearinghouse publications. Contact: 800/848-4815.

Job Accommodation Network. This international consulting resource provides information about employment issues to employers, rehabilitation professionals, and persons with disabilities. Callers are able to explain their specific problem and employment circumstances. Brochures, printed materials, and a newsletter are available at no cost. Contact: 800/ADA-WORK.

Mainstream, Inc. This organization works with employers and service providers nationwide to increase employment opportunities for disabled individuals. It produces videos and publications and provides in-house training, seminars, and technical assistance on ADA compliance. It operates a placement program, Project LINK, in Washington, D.C., and in Dallas, Texas. Contact: 301/654-2400.

Materials Development Center, Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute. The center develops and disseminates information to professionals about vocational rehabilitation and training of students with disabilities. Information and publications are available on vocational evaluation, work adjustment, job placement, and independent living. Contact: 715/232-1342.

National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center. Funded by the National Institute for Literacy, the center provides information on learning disabilities and their implications for the provision of adult literacy services. It houses information on best practices in screening and interventions for learning disabilities,

maintains state fact sheets with area learning disability resources, and moderates a public electronic listserv on learning disabilities. Contact: Mary Ann Corley, director, 800/953-2553 or <http://www.nifl.gov>.

National Center for Learning Disabilities. This organization provides services and conducts programs nationwide for children and adults with learning disabilities, their families, teachers, and other professionals. It provides information on local resources to parents, professionals, employers, and other groups working with learning disabled individuals. Contact: 212/545-7510.

National Institute for Literacy. The institute focuses on four key priorities: providing leadership in the literacy field through national and state advocacy activities; creating and gathering knowledge and information that can improve the quality of literacy services; collaborating to build national, state, and local capacity for effective service delivery; and facilitating communication in the literacy community through a national information and communication system. Contact: Glenn Young, 202/632-1500 or <http://www.nifl.gov>.

President's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities. The committee is an independent federal agency that coordinates and promotes public and private efforts to employ Americans with disabilities. It offers several free publications that address employment issues for adults with learning disabilities. Contact: 202/376-6200.

* Many of these resources can be found in *National Resources for Adults with Learning Disabilities* published in September 1995 by the American Council on Education and National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center.

Endnotes

1. LaDonna Pavetti, *Personal and Family Challenges to the Successful Transition from Welfare to Work* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1997).

2. Center for Law and Social Policy, *CLASP Update* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Social Policy, January 28, 1998).

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.